

Dear SIC Members and Supporters:

This issue of *SIC Clips & Quips* (Volume 4, Issue 4) is sent to share information of special interest to our state's School Improvement Councils.

Save the Date: Plan to Attend the SC-SIC Annual Meeting, March 24 – The SC-SIC Annual Meeting for 2012, will be held on Saturday, March 24, at Dreher High School in Columbia. The agenda for the day, titled “The School-Community Connection: Plugging in to Power Potential,” is now being finalized and will feature speakers and presentations selected to enlighten and empower SIC members and others in attendance. Finalists for the 2012 Riley Award will be featured, and the recipient of the award and the 2012 SIC Advocate of the Year will be announced. Registration fee will be \$25.00. Continue to check the SC-SIC website, <http://sic.sc.gov>, for additional conference and registration information. We hope to see you there on March 24!

15 SICs Named to 2012 SIC Honor Roll – Fifteen (15) School Improvement Councils from across the state have been named to the 2012 SIC Honor Roll as part of the *Dick and Tunky Riley Award for SIC Excellence* process. These SICs are (in alphabetical order):

Airport High School (Lexington School District 2); Baron DeKalb Elementary School (Kershaw County School District); Blythe Academy of Languages (Greenville County Schools); Burton-Pack Elementary School (Richland School District 1); Ebinport Elementary School (Rock Hill School District 3); Hammond Hill Elementary School (Aiken County Public School District); Jennie Moore Elementary School (Charleston County School District); Jesse Boyd Elementary School (Spartanburg School District 7); North Augusta Elementary School (Aiken County Public School District); Port Royal Elementary School (Beaufort County School District); St. James Elementary School (Horry County Schools); Satchel Ford Elementary School (Richland School District 1); Seneca High School (School District of Oconee County); West View Elementary School (Spartanburg School District 6); Woodmont Middle School (Greenville County Schools).

These Honor Roll SICs will continue in the running for the SC-SIC's annual *Riley Award*. Named for the former U.S. Secretary of Education and South Carolina Governor and his late wife, the Riley Award was created in 2002 to recognize the vital contributions made by the 14,000-plus local School Improvement Council members who volunteer in every public school in the state. Five finalists from this year's list of Honor Roll schools will be selected late next month, with one to be named as the winner of the 2012 *Riley Award*. The award will be announced at the SC-SIC Annual Meeting, March 24.

Diane Jumper Leaves SC-SIC Staff – SC-SIC regrets to announce that, due to budget reductions for 2011-12, Senior Council Specialist Diane Jumper is no longer on staff. Diane provided excellent training, support and technical assistance for SICs statewide, and especially for the state's most at-risk schools. We know Diane's special touch will be missed by local SICs as much as it is in the SC-SIC office. Many who have worked directly with Diane over the last eight years have contacted SC-SIC to express their concern that she is no longer available to make personal visits to their schools. Please know that all SICs are welcome and encouraged to contact the SC-SIC office, 1-800-868-2232, for any assistance they require.

State House Update – The second session of the 118th S.C. General Assembly began on January 10th. What follows are several items of note:

- In presentations before the House Ways & Means Public Education subcommittee, the full Ways & Means Committee, and the Senate Education Committee over the last two weeks, State Education Superintendent Dr. Mick Zais and the S.C. Department of Education requested \$14.5 million in new funding for 2012-13 to maintain the state's Base Student Cost (BSC) at the current level of \$1,880/year. (The BSC, if fully funded in accordance with state law, should be at \$2,790 for 11-12. The BSC has not been fully funded in the last 10 years.) Dr. Zais also requested an additional \$36 million for new school buses; \$5 million for bus fuel and parts; and replacement of

\$56 million in nonrecurring funds with recurring state General Fund dollars through cost savings or funding shifts.

- On January 18, SC-SIC provided testimony to the Ways & Means Public Education subcommittee regarding its Education Improvement Act (EIA) funding for 2012-13. SC-SIC's current EIA funding stands at \$127,303 – representing a 15% cut last year. (SC-SIC's total funding for 2011-12 is \$227,303, with cuts in total funding over the last four years of more than 31%.) To maintain an acceptable level of services to local SICs and to prevent further layoffs of staff providing these services, SC-SIC requested that the subcommittee approve and recommend to the full Ways & Means Committee an EIA funding level for 2012-13 of \$162,303, or an increase of \$35,000 over SC-SIC's current EIA funding.
- Ways & Means budget subcommittees are scheduled to meet through mid-February. The full House Ways & Means Committee is set to begin debate on the 2012-13 budget starting February 21, with the House budget floor debate to begin March 13.
- Two bills related to school choice were filed during the first week of the session and have been referred to the House Ways & Means Committee:
 - **H.4547** would allow parents/legal guardians to take a state tax deduction up to specified amounts for children to attend an independent school, a public school outside their attendance area or for home schooling, and authorizes a tax credit for contributions made to nonprofit scholarship funding organizations.
 - **H.4576** would allow specified tax credits for parents/legal guardians for children to attend an independent school or for home schooling, and authorizes tax credits for contributions made to nonprofit scholarship granting organizations providing grants to children eligible for free/reduced lunch or Medicaid benefits to attend an independent school.
- To voice support for SC-SIC and the work it does for local SICs, or to offer comment on any proposed legislation, contact your State Representatives and Senators through the Legislature's website, www.scstatehouse.gov. Tools are available on the site to read and monitor legislation being considered during the current session, as are listings, calendars and agendas for upcoming committee and subcommittee meetings.

Remember, *SIC Clips & Quips* is sent to all SIC members and supporters who share their email addresses with us. Please feel free to print out and share this information with fellow SIC members who may not have received it. We are here to help you, so please contact us any time!

TFH

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"Civic Engagement in Public Education"

